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4/24/79

AA004

HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY

ARGENTINA: CLANDESTINE PRISONERS

SOURCE: Buenos Aires 3056

On April 18, Embassy Buenos Aires submitted a special assessment of the clandestine prisoner issue based on an all ~~source~~ review (DCM, Political Section, ~~representative~~ ^{representative} visiting from HA) of whether clandestine ~~prisoners~~ prisoners exist and, if so, how many and under what conditions. The report was stimulated by repeated but unverifiable reports from released prisoners concerning clandestine (unpublicized, officially unacknowledged) facilities and prisoners.

The Embassy concluded that there are probably several categories of clandestine prisoners:

- "in process" prisoners who have been detained legally or ^{abducted} ~~legally~~ and are being held for interrogation and subsequent determination as to whether they will be resurfaced as Executive Branch (PEN) prisoners, released, or murdered;
- ^(those who are) trustees and ~~others~~ cooperating with the security forces and whose location may be known to their families but is otherwise kept secret to protect the individuals; some of these prisoners probably appear on "disappeared" lists;
- retrainees who are participating in rehabilitation programs; again families may know the whereabouts of such prisoners;
- prisoners held at the Disposition of Military Authorities (DAM prisoners); such prisoners have been visited by ICRC representatives and their families know their whereabouts, but their detentions are not officially acknowledged; and

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

() Release (X) Excise () Deny

Exemption(s): B1

Declassify: (X) In Part () In Full

(X) Classify as S () Extend as () Downgrade to Date 3/12/01 Declassify on Reason 25X1

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may
--some who/fall within other as yet unknown "covert" categories.

While the Embassy ^{finds} ~~notes that~~ the available ~~data~~ ~~is~~ insufficient to establish either ~~global or category~~ the total number of clandestine prisoners or the numbers for any specific categories, it concludes that ~~the global figure is probably~~ several hundred persons may be involved and several thousand persons ~~are~~ probably ~~are~~ are not. Security procedures that permit the routine murder of prisoners argue ~~according to the Embassy~~ ~~that~~ for the smaller figure, according to the Embassy. It would simply be ^{rather} expedient to eliminate detainees/~~rather~~ than shoulder the problems inherent in keeping them alive in large clandestine facilities.

^{a somewhat-larger}
Local human rights organizations tend to estimate/~~the~~ clandestine prisoner population ~~some~~ than the Embassy, but they have not pressured the government on this issue, notes the report, because they fear that the prisoners will be killed rather than resurfaced or released.

INR/RAR: J. Buchanan

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